

Ideas to Reinforce Traits

Organization:

- Cut apart and laminate a picture book without words. I like Zoom by Banyan. Give each student at least one page (my classes are small so each student usually has three or more pieces.) Turn them loose to assemble the story in any order and then have them tell the story orally to justify the order. Have them reassemble the story in a different way to produce another plot.
- Place students in small groups or work individually. Use a grouping of any items, shoes, potato chips, popcorn, stuffed toys, candy, or any other set and ask students to put them in order in any way they choose. Then ask students to describe or justify the way they have organized their items. I use this to lead into showing how graphic organizers can be used for different types of essay writing: cause/effect; comparison/contrast; sequential and chronological order; etc. Ask them to find a graphic organizer that would be appropriate for the organizational method they have used. Now, write an essay on a topic of choice or one the teacher selects for the class. If everyone writes on the same topic, it is a clear illustration of how different organizational methods affect the essay.
- Use statistical data from census or other to create a spreadsheet. Create different types of charts, line graphs, etc. Write a supporting paragraph.

Word Choice:

- Make a list of favorite words and phrases to place in writing folder as a personal thesaurus. Similar to word walls, but personalized.
- Play games like Scrabble and Scattergories, with a twist. If playing Scrabble, for example, allow only verbs or descriptive words. For Scattergories, ask students to create their own cards.
- Also for thesaurus or as a challenge in groups: Have students begin with a common verb like run, walk, or said. Set a time limit and see how many different ways they can express the same idea with a different word or phrase. If they get stuck, tell them to think about animals, inanimate objects, etc. to determine how they walk, talk, etc.
- Create your own Magnetic Poetry kits using Word tables, printable magnet sheets, and a printer. Have students select words for an era, a character, a profession. Put the cut out words into an Altoids metal container. Write poems using those words. We had fun creating Shakespearean insults using Renaissance vocabulary.

Idea:

- Start with a two word sentence such as “They fought.” Expand into a sentence that uses neither of the first two words, but creates a picture of the two word sentence.
- Reduce a long paragraph into a two word sentence.
- Bring each student a piece of fruit or other food item. Examine it carefully and choose any sense other than taste or sight to describe it. Ever “Hear” an orange? Allow students to eat the item when paragraph is satisfactorily completed.

Voice:

- Find quotes from current celebrities or athletes. People Magazine, Us, Seventeen all have quotes or interviews you can use. Create a matching quiz to determine who made the statement. You can also use characters from stories, famous persons you are studying, but teens like the juicy gossip. Ask them to identify what words helped them identify the speaker.
- Take a sample of expository prose from a textbook and rewrite it in a new voice. I especially like taking a lab report on dissection and writing it from the dissectee's point of view. You can also do this with police reports or accident reports for a real-world connection.
- Gather shoes, hats or other articles of clothing or personal items that might be found in a suitcase. Pick items at random and ask students to create sentences to describe the wearer or user of the item. Build a character sketch; then, create a monologue for the character. Pair students and have them create a dialogue using each character's voice. You may let students select the topic of discussion or give them a situation to discuss.
- Using the same items as above, create a story in which the items have voices. What do they think about being crammed in the suitcase together? Is one snooty and proper? Another feel out of place and left out? Where are they going? Have they met before? Do they like each other? Write as a play script and read aloud in groups as reader's theater. Have other groups guess which item belongs to which voice.
- Find pictures related to your area of study...like pioneer photos with My Antonia. Ask them to craft a voice for the image.
- Have students create a scrapbook of images with captions and quotes for any character in a story or novel. The scrapbook should have the appearance of being in the care of the character. If they are neat, it should be neat; if they are psychotic, it might be disordered and messy.
- Rewrite a boring sentence as another persona. Change the words, but not the meaning of the message.

Sentence Fluency:

- Select a poem for use as a Reader's Theatre piece. Look for repetition of lines. Music lyrics work well, too. Allow students a limited amount of time to prepare...15-20 minutes. If there are repeated lines, they see that they can say them exactly the same way each time, or the performance is dull; so they find an interpretation through vocal expression...adding a voice each time, moving with the line, emphasizing a different word each time, etc.
- Joyful Noise by Paul Fleishman is a great poetry book for partner or small group readings.
- Magnetic Poetry has an online web site at www.magneticpoetry.com. Use this site to create poems or interesting phrases to use in a poem.

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